Reorganization of Defense Coordinating Officer and Element

A Monograph
by
MAJ Tanya L. Schilling
U.S. Army

School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

AY 2012-002

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
14-11-2012	SAMS Monograph	JAN 2012 – DEC 2012

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Organization Change to Defense Coordinating Officer and Defense Coordinating Elements

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

Major Tanya L. Schilling

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
School for Advanced Military Studies
320 Gibson Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

The structure of the Defense Coordinating Officer and Element in 2005 impeded coordination and interagency cooperation during the federal response efforts after Hurricane Katrina. In 2006, the program reorganized in order to set the stage for improved coordination and training of the pertinent military personnel. This paper will discuss the changes and analyze the impact on the effectiveness of the Defense Support of Civil Authorities mission.

The analysis will cover three areas affected by the organizational changes; the level of coordination between the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO), his staff the Defense Coordinating Element (DCE), and other federal disaster response organizations, the increased training level of the DCO and DCE personnel, and the decreased lead-time required before requested assistance arrives in the disaster area. These changes are in direct response to the 2006 organizational changes, which identified and staffed full-time Defense Coordinating Officers and Elements (DCO/E) and co-located them with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offices. These changes have a causal effect on the improved effectiveness of the mission.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: Unclassified / Releaseable			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			**19b. PHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)*
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	47	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

MAJ Tanya L. Schilling

Title of Monograph: Reorganization of Defense Coordinating Officer and Element

Approved by:

_____ Matthew Schmidt, Ph.D.	Monograph Director
_____ Robert J. Dixon, COL, LG	Second Reader
_____ Thomas C. Graves, COL, IN	Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
_____ Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.	Director, Graduate Degree Programs

Abstract

The structure of the Defense Coordinating Officer and Element in 2005 impeded coordination and interagency cooperation during the federal response efforts after Hurricane Katrina. In 2006, the program reorganized in order to set the stage for improved coordination and training of the pertinent military personnel. This paper will discuss the changes and analyze the impact on the effectiveness of the Defense Support of Civil Authorities mission.

The analysis will cover three areas affected by the organizational changes; the level of coordination between the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO), his staff the Defense Coordinating Element (DCE), and other federal disaster response organizations, the increased training level of the DCO and DCE personnel, and the decreased lead-time required before requested assistance arrives in the disaster area. These changes are in direct response to the 2006 organizational changes, which identified and staffed full-time Defense Coordinating Officers and Elements (DCO/E) and co-located them with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offices. These changes have a causal effect on the improved effectiveness of the mission.

Table of Contents

Introduction

As the single point of contact between federal responders and the Department of Defense (DoD) during a disaster response, the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) has a critical, though understated, job within the military. This include building and maintaining habitual relationships with state, regional, and other federal response organizations, National Guard and Reserve military commands, and federal military installations and commands in order to create synergy and continuity of support for all defense support of civil authorities (DSCA) missions.[1] Additionally, the DCO and his staff plan, coordinate, prepare, and train to support disaster response activities in conjunction with their state, regional, and federal organizational partners. The DCO understands the military commander's intent and can articulate it to all levels of responding organizations, providing a critical link between the military and civilian agencies. Historically, federal disaster response is primarily for regional disasters and is limited in scope. This limits the external exposure afforded these response operations and keeps the larger military and civilian populations' understanding of the DSCA mission minimal.

This is not the case in large-scale disaster response operations. The sheer magnitude of large-scale disasters increases the amount of media exposure and brings the federal response into sharper focus. The most recent, large-scale federal response is the disaster response operations after Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast of America in August 2005. The DCOs for both Mississippi and Louisiana were on the ground prior to landfall and were instrumental in providing advice to the state and local responders regarding the capabilities the military could provide to them. The DCEs arrived very soon after landfall to help with request processing and

[1] Michael Weimer, "DCO supporting slides," (US Army North working slides, unpublished, 2011), 3.

control of the military forces working within the disaster area. Though the military response was effective in the end, the initial phases were not as efficient as they could have been. This was because the structure of the DCO/E impeded coordination and interagency cooperation before a disaster declaration. In 2006, the program reorganized in order to set the stage for improved coordination and training of the pertinent military personnel. This paper will prove that the changes made to the DCO and DCE organization have improved coordination between federal agencies, increased the training level of assigned personnel, and decreased the lead-time required before requested assistance arrives in the disaster area, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the DSCA mission.

Before conducting the analysis, it is important to understand the history and evolution of the DSCA mission, and the underpinning reasons and legal authorities of the program. The importance of the mission and a comparison of the old and new systems will follow the background discussion. At this point, the paper will cover an assessment of three measures of increased effectiveness: coordination level with other response agencies, DCO/E training level, and the response timeline for military capabilities. The assessment will discuss the changes made during the 2006 reorganization and how they affected the program. These changes include the identification of full-time active duty DCOs, creation of full-time DCEs, and their collocation with each of the ten FEMA regional office. Throughout the discussion, analysis, and conclusion, it will become apparent that the changes made to the DCO and DCE organization increased the overall effectiveness of the DSCA mission.

Methodology

This paper deals with how the organizational changes have affected the effectiveness of the DCO/E during a federal disaster response. Since no large federal disaster response has occurred since the organizational changes, there is limited quantifiable data to prove or disprove the hypothesis. As such, the author used a questionnaire from current and past DCOs and current

DCE and FEMA personnel, personal interviews, exercise data, and other federal agency reports as the primary proof used to support subjective conclusions reference the overall improvements to DSCA response effectiveness since 2006. In order to collect information regarding the historical and current organization and procedures, the author sent a questionnaire via email, in lieu of direct interviews, to one representative from each FEMA region and US Army North (ARNORTH) G3. These representatives forwarded an additional questionnaire to FEMA representatives within their regional office.[2] Of the twenty-one questionnaires sent out, eight recipients responded, through either return email or telephonic conversation. The eight respondents include three retired Army colonels who were DCOs under the old system. One of these is now an active DCE member, another is a FEMA representative, and the final individual is in charge of the DCO/E training program as part of ARNORTH's G3 shop. Additionally, several of the respondents were members of DCEs during the transition to the new system. Two of these are still active DCE members and one is a FEMA representative. In total, the eight respondents have over thirty years of experience with the DSCA mission. Additionally, the author conducted personal interviews with two respondents and conducted three telephonic interviews with additional DCE and FEMA personnel. The intent for these interviews was to gather first person knowledge and experience with the program, and gain knowledgeable opinions reference the consequences the changes had on the effectiveness of the DSCA mission.[3] This data set is not widely available through historical documentation or public domain information and was

[2] Full copies of these questionnaires are included in Appendix A. The response rate for the questionnaire is 38% while the total response rate, including the interviews and telephonic conversations, is 46%.

[3] The author informed each respondent of the intended use of the gathered data and received a signed informed consent form from each before adding their information to the compilation of data. A blank example of the consent form is included in Appendix B.

gathered most effectively and reliably through interviews with involved personnel. Additionally, US Army Audit Agency reports will supplement these observations. Analysis will focus on the frequency of coordination between the agencies to explore the intangibles such as increased confidence in the abilities of the other responders and confidence in the process.

This paper will demonstrate the training level of the DCO and DCE personnel through a review of the current ARNORTH training and certification program and an analysis of the cooperative training between the DCO, DCE personnel, and FEMA personnel. The extent and content of the training is included in this analysis, as well as a comparison of the quality of the training under the new system to that provided prior to the 2006 reorganization. Increases to the training level of the DCO and DCE personnel will be evident after this comparison.

The final metric used to show improved effectiveness of the program is decreased time it takes to deploy requested support into the disaster area. Due to the variables related to deployment timeline, and lack of large military deployment under the new system to base the analysis on, the proof will be circumspect. Two areas of inquiry will demonstrate improvement in this area. The first is a discussion of the pre-scripted mission assignments (PSMA) jointly identified by FEMA and DoD. The second will use the processing time between identification of the capability gap and identification of the unit or equipment to fill the gap. The timeline is based on exercise data provided by ARNORTH, so will have some artificiality inherent to exercise operations but will act as a base for an analysis of improved knowledge and decreased processing time for requests for support.

The analysis included in this paper uses first-hand knowledge and experience of people involved with the program and available data to suggest the improved effectiveness of the DCO/E since the organizational changes. All research for this paper was accomplished according to the Center for Military History guidelines.

Defense Support of Civil Authorities Mission

The Department of Defense defines DSCA as the support provided by DoD personnel in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities for special events, domestic emergencies, designated law enforcement activities, and other domestic activities.[4] This mission covers a wide spectrum of support to include everything from response to natural disasters, terrorist attacks, Presidential inaugurations, and high visibility sporting events such as the Olympics. The key to understanding the mission is the fact that DoD provides support to local civil authorities, through the primary federal agency, in response to request for assistance. In order for the primary federal agency to approve the request, the disaster or event must exceed the state or local organization's organic response capabilities. Once identified, and deployed to a disaster area, the military personnel support the state and local responders; they are not in charge of the response efforts. A discussion of the history of this regulatory requirement and authorizations is the subject of the next section.

In addition to the legal authorizations, it is important to understand the forces authorized to conduct these missions. The DoD directive definition specifies that U.S. Federal military, National Guard, DoD civilians, DoD contract personnel, and DoD component assets all support DSCA missions.[5] This allows all associated DoD personnel to provide requested support, though other regulatory limitations do exist which limit some of the units from conducting certain missions. Most notably, the Posse Comitatus Act limits active duty military forces from conducting law enforcement activities unless specifically authorized by the President due to

[4] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 5111.13, 12.

[5] Ibid.

extenuating circumstances.[6] National Guard forces have a much different set of rules, which change based on their status. A brief discussion of the history of the regulatory guidance dictating the conduct of the mission is included, but an in-depth analysis of the limitations and restrictions of specific forces are not within the scope of this paper.

In order to logically limit the scope of investigation and set a baseline against which to judge improvement, this paper will focus on one portion of the DSCA mission set: the disaster response mission supported by active duty military forces. The most well known response of this category in recent memory is the response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. By limiting the scope, missions with assigned forces such as the Joint Task Force-Civil Support, planned special events such as the Presidential inauguration, and on-order missions such as wild land fire fighting support are not considered. [7] To include these missions in the analysis would skew the results, possibly making the military's coordination and response time seem shorter than it is in reality. Before endeavoring to investigate improvements in the recent history, it is important to look at the history of the DSCA mission and discuss the changes to the statutory authorizations and military regulations throughout.

---

[6] U.S. Department of Justice, "The Posse Comitatus Act," *U.S. Department of Justice*, http://www.dojgov.net/posse_comitatus_act.htm (accessed July 13, 2012).

[7] Joint Task Force-Civil Support is a standing joint task force headquarters, which plans and integrates federal military support for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosives incidents (CBRNE incidents). (FM 3-28, 2-27) As a standing headquarters with units assigned to conduct training and planning for the mission, these units do not have the same issues as those who support regular DSCA missions, therefore their inclusion in this analysis would skew the results to make the DoD response better than it may otherwise be. DoD support to wild land fire fighting also falls into this category as there are units identified prior to the start of the summer fire season which are given advance notice to be prepared to deploy in support of the National Interagency Fire Center to support fire fighting missions.

Historical Authority and Regulations

The DSCA mission is a core mission of the military and is one of the four elements included in decisive action as defined by army doctrine.[8] In order to understand the program and its purpose, it is important to acknowledge the evolution of legal authorities and its affect on the doctrine and execution. This section will discuss the legal and regulatory evolution and provide the requisite background to aid in building this understanding.

The U.S. Constitution authorized military support to civil authorities in its most basic form. The Constitution states that the federal government may federalize the militia in order to uphold the law, maintain civil order, and repel invasions.[9] Some people opine that this regulatory authorization is in the Constitution because of Shay's Rebellion in 1786-1787. During this rebellion, Massachusetts residents rebelled against the government because of an economic recession that started at the end of the Revolutionary war, almost three full years prior. The people requested economic relief but received nothing from either the state or federal government. The rebellion's intensity peaked on 25 January 1787 when armed civilians attempted to assault the federal arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts. With the help of the armory's cannons, the defending forces stopped the assaulting civilians. The rebellion largely culminated with the battle, but the landscape of American civil defense authorities was forever changed. The

[8] U.S. Department of Defense, *ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations*, iii. ADP 3-0 discusses DSCA as an element of decisive action along with offense, defense, and stability operations. By extension, any discussion of decisive action or unified land operations in any military regulation includes the discussion of DSCA if the operations occur within the United States, its territories, and protectorates

[9] The actual wording in Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution states: "The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States…to provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions."

bloody conclusion impressed the importance of a strong federal government upon several regional leaders and lawmakers.

As the Constitutional Convention met in May 1787, this rebellion was forefront on a number of the delegate's minds. Edmund Randolph of Virginia stated that the federal government could not "check the quarrels between states, nor a rebellion in any."[10] Rufus King and Nathaniel Gorham of Massachusetts concurred with Randolph. Their experience as prior Confederation Congressmen, combined with the recent rebellion and bloodshed in their home state, made them proponents for a strong federal government. It has been stated that this mindset lead to the provision for the federal government to utilize the militia to uphold civil order in Section 1, Article 8. This authority and was enacted back as far as 1794, when President George Washington nationalized over twelve thousand militiamen from four states and led them into western Pennsylvania to quash the Whiskey Rebellion, testing the new government's resolve to aid their citizens and provide for their security. [11]

At the time, legal authorizations only allowed the military to assist in upholding the law, maintaining civil authority, and repelling invasions; it did not extend to cover any disaster recovery or relief mission. This was due to the commonly held belief that conduct of these operations fell to the affected community or person's neighbor, community, church or other charity organization. As the United States grew, the community charitable organizations expanded, giving them more capabilities to handle the majority of small, localized disasters and reinforcing this opinion. Local and state government's capabilities for assisting their population

---

[10] Springfield Technical Community College, "Shay's Rebellion," *Making a Nation*, 2008, http://shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/shaysapp/about/index.jsp (accessed 21 May 2012).

[11] Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* [New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 1986], 3.

also grew, enabling these three groups of organizations to provide the majority of disaster response and recovery requirements. However, when the requirement exceeded the available capabilities, state and local leaders could ask the federal government for assistance. There are historical examples as far back as the New Madrid earthquakes of 1811 and 1812 of state leaders requesting federal assistance, but there was no formal program for disaster response or recovery.[12] Federal disaster recovery operations provided assistance and funding on an incident-by-incident basis. The absence of a formal program, and resulting lack of funding, required Congress to pass separate laws for each federal disaster relief operation to authorize support. This equated to 128 separate disaster relief laws between 1803 and 1950.[13] One can well imagine how ineffective this process was.

Though cumbersome and time consuming, this system continued to work for disaster response and relief until mid-1941 when the federal government took a more active role in civil defense. President Roosevelt created the Office of Civilian Defense to create defense-related programs to minimize damage from aerial bombardment, chemical attack, and related acts of war focused on the American population. Though this program added a more active role in the defense of the homeland, the majority of the response policies still relied on the population and

---

[12] Gregory McNamee, "The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-12," *Encyclopedia Britannica Blog*, entry posted February 7, 2012, http://www.britannica.com/blogs/2012/02/madrid-quakes-181112 (accessed May 21, 2012). Governor William Clark of Missouri requested federal disaster relief after a series of four earthquakes flattened or damaged almost everything in an area of 600,000 square kilometers from the epicenter. The New Madrid seismic zone is the scenario FEMA uses as the practical exercise for their basic training course to this day.

[13] Federal Emergency Management Agency, "A Citizen's Guide to Disaster Assistance," *Emergency Management Institute* [May 2011], http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is7.asp (accessed May 12, 2012).

community volunteers to enact the programs.[14] Additionally, the Office of Civilian Defense did not have a permanent funding stream for disaster response; they still had to request funding for each incident individually. The National Security Resources Board replaced the Office of Civilian Defense in 1949 with no corresponding change in the scope of the program.

Changing international sentiments, and the successful Russian nuclear test, caused the administration to create yet another agency in 1950, the Federal Civil Defense Administration. Approved concurrently, the Federal Civil Defense Act conferred this agency with the authority to provide "a system of civil defense for the protection of life and property in the United States from attack and from natural disaster."[15] Additionally, Public Law No. 81-875 formalized the federal response to natural disasters. Both documents stated that the federal and state governments shared the civil defense and response authorities, with the federal agencies in charge of the defensive policies and the civilian sector in charge of the response activities.

In response to these new authorities, DoD published guidance to establish policies and responsibilities for DSCA missions.[16] The first of these, Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 3025.1 specified the planning and preparation responsibilities of each department and staff agency for all areas of civil defense. Military service responsibilities focused on planning for civil defense against enemy actions; disaster response and recovery planning was still not a priority mission for the military, though the directive did specify requirement to support civil

---

[14] David G. Delaney, "Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950," *eNotes>Law and Politics*, 2004, http://www.enotes.com/federal-civil-defense-act-1950-reference/federal-civil-defense-act-1950 (accessed May 21, 2012), 1.

[15] Library of Congress. Federal Research Division. "Military Support to Civil Authorities: The Role of the Department of Defense in Support of Homeland Defense," by Alice R. Buchalter, *Library of Congress*, [February 2007]: 3-4, http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/CNGR_Milit-Support-Civil-Authorities.pdf (accessed May 12, 2012).

[16] Ibid, 8.

authorities. DoD reissued DoDD 3025.1 in 1956 in order to refocus the military on providing support for domestic emergencies such as fires, floods, earthquakes, and severe storms. Concurrently, DoD published DoDD 3025.10, specifically addressing military support to civil defense for the first time. The Army played the largest role in supporting this mission, with the Navy and Air Force coordinating their activities through the army. These regulations, programs and procedures, and the laws they supported, remained largely unchanged until repealed by Public Law 91-606, the Disaster Relief Act of 1970.

PL 91-606 expanded the current disaster relief programs and increased the required coordination of the federal relief programs. Additionally, the law encouraged the states to develop comprehensive relief plans to better plan and prepare for disaster relief operations.[17] The resulting military directive modification updated the responsibilities and policies as well as providing general guidance to all DoD components reference providing support to civil authorities for natural disaster response and recovery, specifying that all military forces were under the direction of the Office of Emergency Preparedness for these operations. A later version, published in 1971, identified the Secretary of the Army as the executive agent for all military support for disaster response. Commensurate with this, the Secretary of the Army now has direct coordination authority with the Office of Emergency Preparedness and the Secretary of Defense regarding DSCA planning and operations as well as the responsibility to direct the allocation of all military resources directed to support these missions.[18] This iteration solidified the Army's lead role in planning for and providing military forces to support civil authorities in response to all man-made

[17] Pub. Law No. 91-606, 84 Stat 1744, Dec 31, 1970 as quoted by the Library of Congress, *Military Support to Civil Authorities*, 4.

[18] Ibid, 11.

and natural disasters. Both the Navy and Air Force have supporting roles and provide both personnel and equipment to missions as required. The Army has the additional responsibility of being the national level point of coordination and interaction between the military and the civilian organizations and agencies, a responsibility that remains in place today. DoD published directive 3025.1 again in 1980, providing few changes other than an updated definition of civil emergencies and clarification on both the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff's responsibilities. The directive did not change again until well after the next legislative change.

The next significant change to the legal authorities directing DSCA missions occurred in 1988 with the enactment of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). The changes included another expansion of federal disaster relief programs to assist state and local governments regarding response and recovery operations after major natural disasters. The Stafford Act also specifically authorizes local military forces to provide an immediate response to save life, prevent human suffering, and mitigate great property damage without receiving prior approval from the Secretary of Defense.[19] These missions may last up to ten days without approval or funding, but the local commander must request a mission assignment as soon as possible. As with previous legislation, this law also specifies that the federal response be in support of the state and local response. While amended since 1988 to clarify some minor issues, the procedures and legal authorities contained therein are still currently valid.

The Stafford Act modified some of the legal authorities and specifications for military support, but did not significantly affect the current policies and procedures. Accordingly, the

[19] U.S. Department of Defense, *FM 3-28, Civil Support Operations*, 3-9.

military did not change its directive at this time, as there were no substantive changes to how the military planned for and conducted DSCA missions. In 1993, DoD republished 3025.1, consolidating the policies and procedures in all the previous versions and creating one system to provide military support to civil authorities. This system provides guidance to all DoD components to plan for and respond to requests for support from the civil authorities.[20] As the DSCA mission has evolved over the years, additional instructions have been published in order to ensure common understanding and further detailed guidance to the DoD components. One such addition is DoDD 3025.15. Published in 1997, this directive establishes policy and procedures for processing and approving requests for assistance from state and local authorities. It also identifies evaluation criteria for the military approval authorities to use when evaluating the military's ability to support a particular request. Both of these directives are still the currently in use today.

Though the military's authorities have changed little, legal authorities and procedures within the larger program have changed. One such change occurred in 2003 when President Bush signed the Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5). This directive instructed FEMA to develop and administer the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS provides a nationwide template to enable all levels of disaster responders to work together to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of incidents.[21] Included in the program is a scalable, flexible, unified command structure, focused on retaining command and control of incident response as the lowest level. Additionally, HSPD-5 allowed for the creation of the National Integration Center (NIC), charged with the routine and continuous

[20] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 3025.1, 1.

[21] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Incident Command System*, i.

refinement of NIMS. NIC personnel integrate best practices and lessons learned from recent incidents and disasters into the NIMS rapidly, enabling constant growth in the federal response.

The Army's field regulation covering civil support captures the final iteration of policy changes wrought by HSPD-5. Published in 2010, FM 3-28 elaborates on the definition of civil support operations offered in other regulations and focuses on the different aspects of DSCA, to include a discussion of the legal considerations commanders face. [22]

Throughout the history of the military's support to civil authorities, the mission has evolved from civil defense, primarily focusing on civil disturbances and enemy invasions, to a two-pronged focus with the addition of civil security missions, which include disaster response. The focus on the command relationships have also changed from a singular focus to a dual focus. DoD has the lead on homeland defense to protect the country from foreign threats and invasions, but is subjugated to the civilian authorities during civilian uprisings and the gambit of civil security operations, to include disaster response operations. These changes occurred early in the evolution of the formal federal response programs initiated with the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950. Current policy dictates that federal forces only deploy in support of a request initiated from local or state responders, and only after the president has declared a federal disaster area.

Importance of and Responsibility for the DSCA Mission

This history section is included to aid the understanding of the background and legal authorities of the DSCA mission, which has been a core mission of the military for the majority

[22] U.S. Department of Defense, *ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations*, iii. ADP 3-0 discusses DSCA as an element of decisive action along with offense, defense, and stability operations. By extension, any discussion of decisive action or unified land operations in any military regulation includes the discussion of DSCA if the operations occur within the United States, its territories, and protectorates.

of United States history. It demonstrates the evolution of the authorities and responsibilities as the state, local, and federal capabilities and beliefs have changed, while detailing the military component of the response efforts. As the history shows, the expectation for federal forces to assist state and local responders with disaster response has been around for at least 200 years, though only a formalized core mission for a little over sixty years. Even with this lengthy history, many active duty personnel do not truly grasp the breadth of the mission set or the specifics relating to it. [23] In fact, the majority of active duty forces believe that DSCA missions are the bailiwick of the National Guard, and for the most part, they are correct. The primary reason for this oversight is that active duty forces only support a small part of the mission, so the majority of these forces do not have direct knowledge of specifics. DSCA has always been subordinate to the military's primary focus of national security. Accordingly, the headquarters relegated as the lead element for DSCA usually has other missions with a higher priority than that of planning for disaster response missions. At the inception of DSCA in 1950, the Army Field Forces had the military support to civil authorities' mission. Based on the legal authorities and regulatory guidance, their requirements for DSCA was primarily a planning and coordination mission, with not a lot of time or resources spent in explaining this requirement to the active duty forces. Though the responsible command changed through the years, the mission remains constant through to today's military. The majority of active duty forces will not support a disaster response mission, so it does not make sense to dedicate time to train units on these missions. The headquarters elements are another matter.

[23] Generalization based on the author's personal experience discussing the DSCA mission with her peers and co-workers.

The coordination required to accomplish this mission successfully has grown considerably as the complexity of the state and federal governments have increased. Accordingly, the assigned headquarters must spend more time and energy on maintaining the requisite relationships. In 1993, the commander for Forces Command (CINCFOR) assumed the mission to support DSCA, with the commanders for Atlantic and Pacific Commands in supporting roles.[24] CINCFOR did the majority of the planning and coordination in conjunction with the local, state, and federal entities. This planning mission incorporated disaster planning for all the states, possessions, and territories worldwide. Additionally, they deployed in support of any federal disaster response operations in the 48 continental states and Washington, D.C. Similarly, Atlantic Command and Pacific Command deployed in support of federal disaster response activities in their respective area of operations: Puerto Rica and the US Virgin Islands in the Atlantic theater, and Alaska, Hawaii, territories and possessions in the Pacific theater. CINCFOR split the DSCA mission split between two headquarters, Fifth US Army (ARNORTH) and First US Army, effectively dividing the country into two geographical regions. Though these commands had the DSCA mission, their primary mission was training the National Guard and Reserve units within their regions. This is also true for the subordinate brigade commanders and brigade staffs who would be responsible for providing the DCO and DCE personnel to any federal response.

Between 1993 and 2001, the Army and subordinate headquarters had enough time to conduct the training support for their National Guard and reserve units and conduct the planning and coordination for the DSCA mission, even though it was their secondary mission. This was no longer true after 2001 when the U.S. initiated hostilities in Afghanistan and later in Iraq, driving an increased requirement for additional mobilized and trained units. Due to the increase in

[24] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 3025.1, 4-5.

training missions and requirements, the DSCA planning and coordination suffered, at least within some brigades. Additionally, training for the brigade staff members identified to be DCE members was minimal. This training consisted of two online courses and a four day centralized course designed to provide the commander and primary staff officers with an overview of the program and familiarize them with procedures for requesting a federal capability.[25] This was the extent of training for most of the potential DCE members. Some brigades may have been better trained than others were, but as there was no centralized training program or oversight initiative, there is no way to prove additional training prowess. This was the status of these brigades in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast. While the federal response to Hurricane Katrina is not the subject of this paper, the issues within the responding organizations demonstrate an issue with the level of training, experience, and coordination within the program.

Changing Environment

In 2006, DoD redesignated command responsibilities for the DSCA mission in response to a post-Katrina Congressional requirement.[26] As part of this reorganization, ARNORTH became responsible for the DSCA mission for the contiguous United States while First Army assumed responsibility for all of the training support and pre-deployment training, relieving ARNORTH from this responsibility. ARNORTH's sole focus is now on homeland defense and security. Having a single focus allowed for a fundamental shift within the staff and allowed them to reorganize to increase effectiveness in dealing with their unique mission. The DCO and DCE also reorganized during this timeframe, reaching full operational capacity by September 2006.

---

[25] Michael Weimer, interview by the author, San Antonio, TX, March 22, 2012.

[26] Michael Weimer, "Information Paper on the Defense Coordinating Officer Program," US Army North, February 15, 2012, 1.

Prior to this reorganization, the training support brigade commander was the DCO and his primary brigade staff members were the DCE personnel. Only one person on the staff had DSCA as a full-time mission, the DSCA planner. When DoD reorganized the DSCA command structure, they created ten full-time staff offices to act as the DCE and identified a commensurate number of active duty Colonels to act as DCOs for these new offices. The DCO/Es are collocated with each of the FEMA regional offices. The DCO is usually a prior brigade commander, and his staff consists of six active duty military personnel and two DoD civilians. For the last six years, these personnel have worked with the federal and regional responders on a daily basis. Their primary responsibility is to interface with the regional, state, and local military and civilian agencies in their region in order to provide a single point of contact between DoD and other response agencies. Their mission is to coordinate DoD activities with other agencies conducting Homeland Defense and Civil Support operations within the US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) area of responsibility in order to protect the American people and their way of life.[27] With the reorganization, the DCO and DCE personnel can focus all their time and energy on improving their effectiveness and efficiency in accomplishing the DSCA mission.

Assessment of Effectiveness of Organizational Change

The changes made to the DCO/E organization have improved coordination between the federal agencies, increased the training level of assigned personnel, and decreased the lead-time required before requested assistance arrives in the disaster area, therefore increasing the overall effectiveness of the DSCA mission. These changes are primarily because the DCO and staff personnel can focus exclusively on the DSCA mission. They no longer have to split their training

[27] Ibid, 1.

time and planning focus between competing missions. The singular focus enables increased coordination with the other federal response agencies, allows participation in a training and certification program designed to validate the capabilities of the DCO/E as well as exercise the federal coordination procedures, and improves familiarity with the request procedures. Additionally, pre-scripted mission assignments (PSMAs) and a number of technological initiatives have significantly reduced the administrative processing timeline for and increased interagency visibility of requests for support. The decreased processing timeline enables earlier identification and tasking of units, which directly affects the required lead-time required for the support to arrive in the disaster area. In addition, the increased coordination and familiarity between the military and the civilian responders has increased the civilian agencies' understanding of the capabilities provided by the military and the request process utilized to task the military services to provide these capabilities. The next three sections of this paper will provide detailed examples to support these statements.

In order to explain the improvements in each area, it is necessary to know what the old system encompassed. Accordingly, each section will begin with a brief analysis of the program prior to 2006. This will give the reader a baseline against which to judge any claimed or perceived improvement. After the brief history, each section will discuss the data and analysis conducted. Recommendations for further changes follow the conclusion.

Coordination between DCO/E and FEMA

Levels of routine coordination between the DCO/E and federal responders varied widely between regions and DCEs prior to 2006. As a training support brigade commander, the DCO's primary focus was training the National Guard and reserve units within his area of responsibility. Until the terrorist attacks of 2001, this meant assisting the units plan and execute their monthly and annual training. After 2001, the focus shifted from annual training support to pre-deployment training as more reserve and National Guard units deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Additionally, some training support brigades assumed the mission of operating the training sites located at the power projection bases all around America. Accordingly, the brigade staff's focus became preparing the deploying units for war. Since the brigade staff members were the personnel designated to act as the DCE if the DCO/E deployed, the mission shift affected DSCA planning and coordination with external agencies. Due to this shift, only one person remained focused on planning and preparing to support the DSCA mission; the DSCA planner. Each brigade had one DSCA planner, usually a civilian, assigned to the unit to act as the continuity and expert on all aspects of the mission set.[28] With the brigade staff officers primarily focused on pre-deployment training, the onus of coordination and planning for disaster response fell to the planner. This meant that one person was responsible for conducting the coordination and planning intended to as the workload for a brigade staff. Consequently, most planners had too much to do to accomplish it all effectively. This translated to a declining level of coordination and a corresponding lack of familiarity between the organizations responsible for federal disaster response operations. Additionally, this shift in focus and lack of coordination affected the level of confidence with the military capabilities and processes.

Lack of coordination and familiarity between the military and civilian agencies affects mission readiness negatively. This is due to the task organization within the military response, the culture of the state and federal response organizations, and the legal authorizations for disaster response. Personal relationships and familiarity with the available capabilities assist in overcoming the complexities of the mission. They also help the personnel smooth out the

[28] COL (Ret) Laverm "Bullett" Young, email message to the author, May 30, 2012. The majority of DSCA planners were civilians working in each headquarters, but a couple brigades had notably difference experiences. 1-87th Field Artillery Brigade had an active duty service member while the planner for 4-75th Field Artillery Brigade (now 479th FA Brigade) was a member of the US Army Reserves.

inevitable disagreements and misunderstandings that arise from organizational cultural and language differences.[29] The lack of prior relationships and familiarity between the state agencies, political leaders, federal civilian agencies, and military responders affected the effectiveness of the coordination between these agencies early in the response for Hurricane Katrina. After a couple of days of working together, the effectiveness increased as people built relationships and learned to trust each other.[30] The civilian agencies also learned what capabilities the military had to offer, assisting in streamlining the procedures. Additionally, the DCE personnel learned the intricacies of the request process and discovered how to assist the requesting agencies in wording the requests so higher headquarters understood the requested capabilities and statement of work, enabling faster processing. Based on this one example, it is clear that prior knowledge of the personnel, personalities, and operating procedures aides in effective response operations. This statement is true within both civilian and military organizations, so it only makes sense that it would prove doubly true in a joint, interagency environment.

The creation of the standing DCO/E increased the opportunities for prior coordination exponentially. The fact that the military personnel work inside the FEMA regional office allows for daily interactions between personnel from these two major federal response organizations.[31] Additionally, the DCO/E now has a singular focus; they no longer have to split their time between multiple missions. Their sole focus is planning, training, and coordinating with other

---

[29] The stated cultural and language differences are due to organizational vernacular and cultural differences, not difference in national culture and language, though these may affect some response organizations also, based on regional slang and beliefs.

[30] Based on email questionnaire and author's interviews, Leavenworth, KS, 2012. These comments are based on a compilation of the inputs from several former DCOs, two of which were activated for the Hurricane Katrina response, and several standing DCE members.

[31] U.S. Force Protection Audit Agency, *Defense Coordinating Officer Training and Oversight*, GAO-09-849, (Alexandria; U.S. Army Audit Agency, 2010), 12.

response organizations in support of the DSCA mission. The DCE personnel go out of their way to be available for coordination and to answer questions and requests from their FEMA counterparts, and vice versa.[32] Over time, the FEMA and military personnel to become increasingly comfortable with each other, overcome the cultural differences, and learn each other's processes. This familiarity extends beyond the collocated offices to the larger response agencies. Having a full-time DCO/E dedicated to the DSCA mission allows the same individuals to participate in state, regional, and national conferences and exercises. Personnel continuity allows relationships to build and reinforces the confidence in both the responders and with the request process procedures. The high caliber of officers with broad-based experience selected as DCOs further increases the level of confidence between organizations.[33]

The expected outcome of this familiarity is an increased effectiveness of federal disaster responses. The key players know each other prior to arriving at the Joint Field Office and starting the response operations. Responders are familiar with the military capabilities and the DCO/E is very familiar with the request procedures, military and regulatory guidance. The increased efficiency has been tested during several regional disaster responses.[34] One example of a regional disaster response is the I35 bridge collapse in Minnesota in 2007. The DCO/E activated and supported the response efforts, working directly with the local incident commander. DoD provided engineer support and Navy divers for debris removal, and vehicle and victim recovery.[35] During the operation, the other federal responders came to depend on the DCO and his staff, not

---

[32] Based on email questionnaire and author's interviews.

[33] U.S. Force Protection Audit Agency, 12.

[34] Ibid, 15-16.

[35] Mike Chesney, "ARNORTH Hotwash: Minnesota Bridge Collapse and Response to Hurricane Dean," (San Antonio: unpublished, 2007), 3.

only for military expertise, but also for their knowledge of the National Response Plan and overall confidence with the process and legal authorities.[36] The DCO/E experience, training, and familiarity with the federal programs and procedures became an asset to the entire response community.

Another example of the increased effectiveness and efficiency enabled by the increased level of coordination is the federal response operations after Hurricane Irene made landfall along the eastern seaboard of America in 2011. Prior to landfall, seven DCOs and their staffs deployed to five different state EOCs with ARNORTH and NORTHCOM augmentation.[37] Additionally, a command element initiated and operated a base support installation to provide support to the units conducting DSCA missions and assist with equipment and supply flow into the disaster areas. This response did not escalate further as the hurricane's destruction did not overwhelm the state, local, and regional responders. Though not many forces deployed in support of this disaster, the command element's deployment alone validated the training program as well as demonstrating the benefit of advance coordination. The after action review identified a significant increase in coordination and confidence between responders.

The conduct of the DCO/E during these responses support the current organization, as does the quantitative analysis of the time spent coordinating and working with other organizations. In addition to responding to actual disasters, the DCO/E participated in several disaster plan review sessions. These sessions enabled the military to become familiar with the

---

[36] Ibid, 12.

[37] U.S. Army North, "Hurricane Irene AAR: Consolidated Observation," (San Antonio: unpublished, 2011), 2. One DCO/E deployed to each of these three state EOCs: Virginia, Maryland, and New York. North Carolina and Vermont both had a two DCO/Es deployed to their state EOC to provide advice regarding the military capabilities available to support the response efforts.

state and regional disaster response plans, initiating parallel planning to identify capability gaps. This knowledge enabled identification of types of military forces and equipment to fulfill the requirements if requested.

Overall, the level of coordination between DoD and FEMA has increased dramatically since the full-time DCO/E activation. Coordination with other federal, regional, and state response organizations has also increased, though not as much as with FEMA.[38] The continual presence in the FEMA regional offices, and single focus on the DSCA mission, enables continued coordination between these agencies, causing the effectiveness of disaster response activities to continue to increase.

Training of the Defense Coordinating Officer and Element

The training program for the DCO/E personnel under the old system was minimal, consisting of two required online courses and a four-day course sponsored by FEMA. The online training was, and still is, a prerequisite for attendance at the four-day course. The purpose of the four-day course is to discuss the basics of the DSCA program. It includes an introduction to the National Incident Management System, legal authorizations, responsibilities of the major organizations at all levels of response, the emergency preparedness liaison officer program, and request processing. The capstone event for the course is a two-day exercise in which the class reacts to a catastrophic disaster based on the New Madrid earthquake scenario. In addition to the FEMA training, some units planned and conducted internal collective training events, while others participated in state and regional exercises.[39]

---

[38] U.S. Force Protection Audit Agency, 18.

[39] Brian Ebert, interview by author, Kansas City, MO, March 6, 2012.

Though some training support brigades did conduct additional training, not all did. For some units, even maintaining the minimum training readiness was difficult because the staff did not have a lot of time to dedicate to any mission other than training the deploying units. The brigade commander and operations officer had to decide which missions and which training would make the training calendar, and due to the importance of the pre-deployment training mission, collective training and coordination required to fully accomplish the DSCA mission rarely made it to the training calendar.

This was the situation for the 4th Brigade, 75th Division (Training Support) from Fort Sill, OK in 2005 when they were notified to deploy to Baton Rouge, LA to act as the DCO/E for the state of Louisiana for the Hurricane Katrina response. The brigade commander had completed the required training, as had all the primary staff officers, but none of them had participated in any conferences or exercises with state or federal responders. Additionally, his DSCA planner had only just returned from six-month activation where he worked in a different organization in his reserve position, completely unrelated to his DSCA function. Due to this confluence of factors, the brigade was not fully prepared to conduct the mission required of them.

Ultimately, the lack of training did not affect the overall mission accomplishment, but the learning curve for the DCE members was more severe than required.[40] The personnel had to refine their knowledge of the processes and procedures while engaged in disaster response operations. In order to prevent a recurrence, the brigade initiated an internal training program

[40] Lynn E. Davis et al., *Hurricane Katrina Lessons for Army Planning and Operations* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2007), 36. Due to the severity of the disaster, the guidance was to deploy all required support into the disaster area; the paperwork and request procedures became irrelevant during the first few days of the response. Since there was no process for matching capability with a valid request during the first few days of the response for Hurricane Katrina, the lack of coordination and unfamiliarity did not affect the timeliness of military deployments into the disaster area.

once they redeployed from Baton Rouge. This enabled the staff to maintain the organizational knowledge and capitalize on the lessons learned from the Hurricane Katrina response. There were limitations based on the lack of higher-level coordination and external participation in the exercise. There were no interagency players, state or federal responders, and no observer controllers except staff officers from within the brigade.

In conjunction with the reorganization and relocation of the DCO and DCE, ARNORTH instituted an extensive formal training program. Formalized and published in April 2009, the training plan outlines the ARNORTH approved mission essential task list, mission and responsibilities, and the training and certification program for the DCO/E.[41] The training program has four modules to ensure a broad base understanding of all aspects of the DSCA missions. The four modules are uniform across all ten regions and consist of an orientation program, participation in ARNORTH's DSCA course, eleven FEMA courses, and a certification exercise.[42] Each DCO and DCE member must accomplish the online courses for the DSCA phase one course within ninety days of assignment to the office. The required online courses cover a plethora of areas, to include overviews of the National Incident Management System, National Response Framework, and Resource Management.[43] After completing these courses, the DCO and DCE personnel have a solid baseline of knowledge on which to build. The next step in the initial training phase is ARNORTH's DSCA phase two, which is still a four-day resident training event that culminates in a practical exercise. It tests the personnel's knowledge of the processing procedures and federal response authorities and capabilities.

---

[41] Presentation slides by Michael Weimer, 2011, slide 1, "*DCO/E Training Program: Initial,"* U.S. Army North, San Antonio.

[42] U.S. Force Protection Audit Agency, 7-8.

[43] A complete list of the required initial training courses is in Appendix C.

The third module is the menu of FEMA courses available online. These courses expand the DCO/E's knowledge on the process, procedures, regulations, and underlying principles of the response programs and NIMS.[44] There is a full menu of courses covering areas pertinent to every emergency support function and target audience.

The fourth element of the overall DCO/E training program is the certification exercise, during which NORTHCOM replicates all aspects of a large-scale response in a realistic environment. The DCE operates twenty-four hours a day for the duration of the four-day exercise. The simulation is designed to replicate the first few days of a disaster response. Accordingly, there are role players for FEMA representatives, higher and lower headquarters, and media outlets in addition to the DCE's organic personnel, their habitual regional back-up personnel, as well as state and regional emergency preparedness liaisons (EPLOs). The operation plans, scenario data, reports, and requirements are close replicas of actual contingency plans in order to make the exercise as realistic as possible. FEMA representatives and the role players interact with the DCO/E as they would during an actual disaster response. They have specific training objectives to reinforce the individual training, stimulate request-processing procedures, and drive external coordination with other role players. To add to the training value and transferability of the knowledge to real-world situations, the exercise utilizes the DoD DSCA Automated Support System (DDASS) to process all requests for assistance and mission assignments. This is the automated system that all levels of DoD, to include the National Guard, utilize to process, approve, and track request and mission assignments. A discussion of the system and its capabilities is included later in the paper. Using the system during exercises allows the personnel

[44] For a complete menu of available courses, visit the FEMA training site at http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp.

to improve their familiarity with its capabilities and requirements, while providing the inherent tracking and reporting capabilities to the external evaluation team. The evaluation team consists of a former DCO and ARNORTH G7 observer controllers. They are present to act as mentors to the personnel while evaluating the exercise and the effectiveness of the DCO/E's response efforts.

In addition to the required certification training, the ARNORTH training program also has a sustainment requirement. Online training constitutes the baseline sustainment training. Both ARNORTH and FEMA have a series of online training courses available to both FEMA and DoD personnel. In additional to these individual courses, the DCO/Es participate in series of exercises, which aim at maintaining the level of collective training and knowledge. These exercises may include state, regional, or national level exercises, and range from tabletop exercises to national level exercises in which active duty and National Guard units deploy in support.[45] Another supporting level is the ARNORTH sponsored external evaluation that each element participates in every eighteen to twenty-four months. Additional exercises that provide sustainment training include, but are not limited to, exercises developed around national special security requirements, state and regional tabletop exercises, and FEMA exercises.

As the proponent for the DSCA mission, ARNORTH plans, executes, and oversees the entire training program, but they do not do this in a vacuum. NORTHCOM, the secretary of defense, and FEMA are all involved in identifying required training topics. In fact, the DCO training program is very similar to FEMA's certification program for their federal coordinating

[45] VIBRANT RESPONSE is one example of a national level exercise. It is a yearly exercise that occurs in various locations, using a different scenario from the national planning scenarios each year. Active duty, National Guard, and/or Reserve forces usually deploy to the exercise location to support the simulated disaster. This enables the DCO/E to exercise the full range of their mission essential task list.

officers.[46] This continuity between training programs allows the DCO and the federal coordinating officer to present a unified face. The result is that the DCO/E training readiness has improved greatly in the last six years.

Capability Response Timeline

The effectiveness of the military's support to civil authorities can be expressed quantitatively by an analysis of the time required for the requested support capability to arrive in the disaster area. This timeframe can be further broken down into the notification timeline and deployment timeline. The issue with using the deployment timeline in an attempt to understand the effectiveness is multifold. First, the timeline between notification and actual deployment varies greatly between units and their assigned missions. A unit identified as a divisional ready brigade in a light infantry unit has a much shorter notification and deployment timeline than a heavy engineer brigade that is not in an increased readiness posture. Additionally, asking a military unit to deploy with their equipment is another factor that compounds this issue. The geographic location of the unit's home station exacerbates these issues. Accordingly, this paper will not address the actual unit deployment timeline. Instead, a discussion of the notification timeline will address the effectiveness of the DSCA request process. This will remove the variation found within the deployment timeline between different types of units, location of the capability, and the deployment readiness of the units. Similar to the other sections of this paper, a historical perspective reference the procedures will set the baseline response timeline. A discussion of the improvements and examples of the improved timeline will close out this section.

[46] U.S. Force Protection Audit Agency, 8-9.

In a further attempt to isolate factors affecting response timelines, all examples and situations will assume that a federal disaster has been declared and that the DCO/E is already activated and operating in the joint field office with FEMA as the primary federal agency. In scenarios such as this, the processing chain for requests for action flows from the state or local response agency, through the state coordinating officer to FEMA. Once FEMA verifies that the requested capability exceeds the state and local response capability, they forward the request to the emergency support functions for staffing. If none of the federal organizations have the capability available to support the request, it is forwarded to the DCO. After verifying the request is a valid DoD mission, the DCO/E forwards the request to NORTHCOM to enable concurrent planning. At this point, the DCE conducts an in depth analysis to validate the legality, lethality, risk, cost, appropriateness, and readiness of the possible DoD response. [47] Legality and appropriateness verify that DoD has the legal authorities to accomplish the mission while ensuring DoD forces are not portrayed in a negative light. Lethality and risk deal with the safety of the military forces accomplishing the mission while readiness evaluates the impact the mission has on the ability of the military to perform its other assigned missions. The final criterion is cost. In validating cost, the DCE estimates the total expected cost of using DoD forces, identifies who pays the bills, and addresses the impact on the overall DoD budget if reimbursement is not received. After conducting this analysis, the DCO/E submits the results to FEMA. If the requesting agency and FEMA agree to the cost and deployment timeline, both the DCO and federal coordinating officer sign the request forms. In doing so, the request for assistance becomes a mission assignment. FEMA views this mission assignment as an official contract while DoD does not consider the mission assignment completed until the Secretary of Defense

[47] U.S. Department of Defense, *FM 3-28*, 3-13-3-14.

approves the final version of the request. In order to get final approval from the Secretary of Defense, the DCO forwards the mission assignment to NORTHCOM, who forwards it through the Joint Director of Military Support (JDOMS) to the Secretary for official approval. Once approved, JDOMS published the deployment order and the assigned unit begins movement in support of the mission.

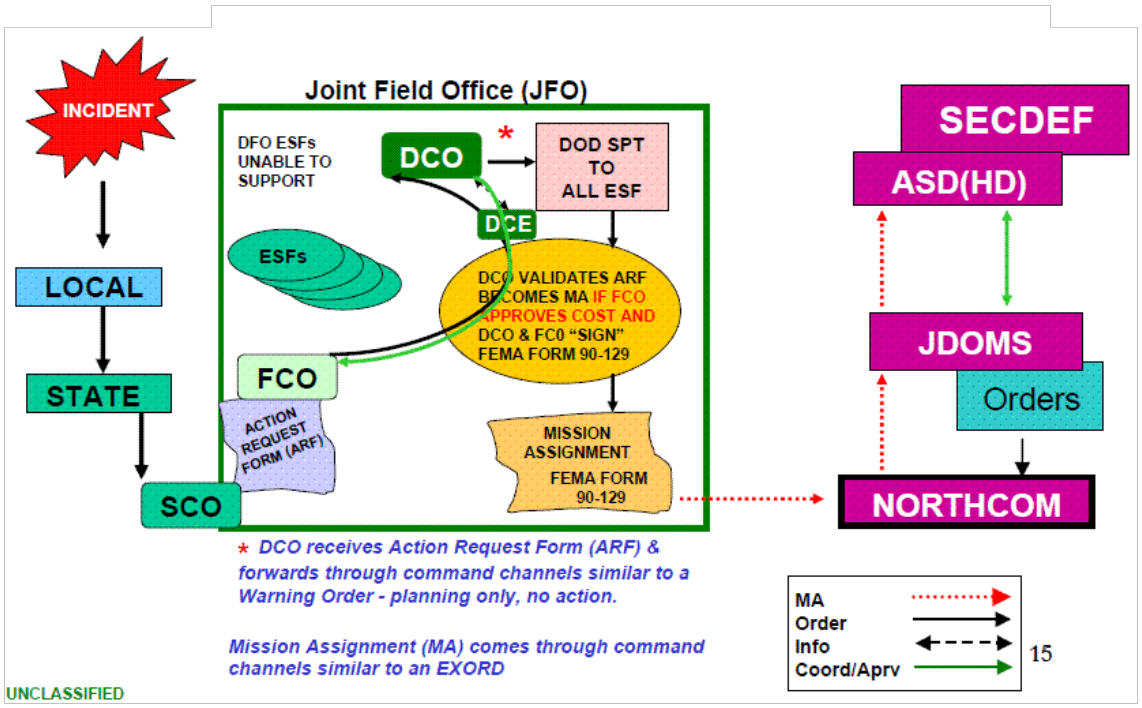

Figure 1: Request for Action/Mission Assignment Processing Flowchart[48]

Prior to 2006, the DoD process was accomplished via email attachments and paper copy requests. There was no automated tracking mechanism that allowed visibility to all involved

[48] National Response Team, "Report: NORTHCOM Information Briefing," Slide15, *National Response Team Conference*, Oct 2008, http://nrt.sraprod.com/nrtconf/reports/2009/RFA%20MA%20process%20Oct%202008.pdf (accessed March 21, 2012).

personnel. FEMA had an automated system to receive and process requests internally, but DoD did not have a similar system. DCE personnel used paper request forms within the joint field office. In order to forward a request, they had to either scan the form and email the attachment or fax it to NORTHCOM headquarters. Once approved through official channels, NORTHCOM emailed or faxed the final mission assignment back to the DCE for tracking. This method of correspondence was very inefficient and did not enable effective tracking of the progress of the request. Though there are no official records available that tracked the exact processing timeline, some mission assignments took several days to matriculate through the chain.[49] Since delays in processing slow the arrival of the requested capabilities into the disaster area, it is imperative to minimize the processing timeline for requests and mission assignments.

One of the initiatives undertaken to reduce the processing timeline was identifying and publishing pre-scripted mission assignments (PSMA). In coordination with twenty-nine other federal agencies, FEMA identified 263 PSMAs, of which twenty-four are for DoD.[50] These mission assignments not only identify the capability required to fill an anticipated capability gap, but also the associated cost with deploying and operating the equipment and personnel. The PSMAs are approved by both the supporting agency and FEMA and are available for all levels of

---

[49] Jack W. Owens and Tanya L. Schilling, "4th Brigade, 75th Division as the Defense Coordinating Element for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita." *FA Journal*, 2006: 18-21. Actual processing time for action request forms and mission assignments were not officially tracked under the old system. Date/time stamps of emails and faxes might have been used to calculate the processing timeline but are not readily available. This is due to the lack of a standard automation solution to gather archival information as mentioned in the referenced article.

[50] Craig Fugate, testimony in front of United Stated House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, Washington, D.C., March 30, 2011. Of the twenty-four PSMAs, four support Mission Command functions, two support Intelligence, eight logistics and transportation support, four provide rotary wing lift assets, three provide medical related support, and two provide Engineer assets for route clearance and site preparation.

disaster response organizations to review. Increased visibility allows the responders to anticipate some available capabilities that can be requested, increasing overall knowledge and confidence in DoD response operations. Though pre-scripted, the mission assignments are not pre-approved. They still have to go through the approval process in order to have units allocated to accomplish the missions. The notification and deployment of units to fulfill these mission assignments is the same as any other. The benefit of the pre-scripted mission assignments rests in the short cut of the entire first portion of the staffing process.

Another initiative designed to overcome the issues with visibility and delays during processing is DDASS; a web-based, automated program designed for processing all requests for support. It provides situational awareness of the requests during all steps of the processing chain and visibility all the way up to the Secretary of Defense. This increased knowledge allows for parallel planning and anticipatory orders. In addition to streamlining the approval process, DDASS tracks the tasks assigned against mission assignments, and the related funding through closure. This cradle-to-grave system provides a single repository for everything related to the DoD missions accomplished during the course of a disaster response. [51] The system also archives the data, maintaining historical record of all DoD actions.

Though DDASS enables all DoD components and commands to process and approve requests digitally, it is currently not integrated with FEMA's system. This means that FEMA operations personnel still have to transfer the data from their system to DDASS, and vice versa, adding a processing delay back into the process. Even with the current air gap, the processing time has decreased significantly from the old paper copy system. For example, during a certification exercise for the FEMA region IX DCO/E in December 2011, the processing timeline

[51] Michael Weimer, March 22, 2012.

for the majority of the requests were under five hours.[52] Though some artificiality may exist because it was an exercise, the fact remains that having an electronic system to process and track requests aids in speeding up processing. The visibility DDASS provides helps speed the process even more by allowing all personnel involved to track the progress in real-time. This way, if the request hangs up somewhere, the DCE can be proactive and help keep the process moving.

Both of these initiatives, PSMAs and DDASS, aim at shortening the processing time between receipt of the request for assistance, and publishing the mission order to deploy a military capability to provide the support. With no large federal response since the reorganization, there is no quantitative real-world data to prove an increase in efficiency, but exercise data is very promising. Additionally, response agencies are more familiar with the available military capabilities because of the PSMAs and increased coordination provided by the full-time DCO/Es. Based on these facts, it is safe to say that the military response timeline will be faster than it was prior to the reorganization.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to analyze the DSCA program regarding how the reorganization of the DCO/E affected the overall effectiveness of the mission. In doing so, it explained the historical authorizations and defined three elements affecting effectiveness of DoD disaster response operations. Then, a deeper analysis of the three elements compared the expected level of support based on the current organization to the known level provided by the pre-2006 organization.

[52] Michael Weimer, "DDASS screen print," US Army North, print from Dec 2011 exercise.

Overall analysis of the reorganized DCO/E suggests that the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster response operations will increase significantly from the pre-2006 level. This is due to the increased coordination level between the federal disaster response organizations and the increased training readiness of the DCO and DCE personnel as well as the decreased request processing timeline allowed by several initiatives. All of these improvements are possible because of the standing DCO/E created by the reorganization of the program.

This increase is most obvious within the first analytical element. By dedicating full time DCOs and DCE personnel, and collocating them with each FEMA region, DoD made DSCA their singular mission. This allows the individuals to work with other federal and regional response organizations on a daily basis. Due to this increased presence and coordination, the other response agencies have become comfortable with DoD capabilities and processes, and vice versa. No longer are responders "exchanging business cards after crossing the line of departure" as they were during the response operations for Hurricane Katrina.[53] Instead, DCO/E personnel are working with the FEMA personnel on a daily basis, participating in the morning briefs, and 'water cooler' discussions. This level of integration is integral in increasing the effectiveness of the DCE during response operations.

In addition to the increased level of coordination afforded by the current organization, DCO/E personnel also have the time to attend state, regional, and national conferences, training, and exercises. These events add to the baseline training level provided them by the initial training program. This training plan includes four elements: ARNORTH orientation, initial online training, ARNORTH's DSCA course, and a certification exercise. The elements all tie together to

[53] Anthony F. Daskevich II, email message to the author, June 17, 2012. COL (Ret) Daskevich was the DCO for the state of Louisiana during the Hurricane Katrina and Rita responses.

ensure the personnel have knowledge of a wide-spectrum of topics related to disaster response operations, FEMA processes and procedures, and national authorities and regulations. Having a broad baseline of knowledge helps increase the effectiveness by showing the other response organization personnel that the DCO and DCE personnel are invested in the process, while ensuring the personnel have the background knowledge and procedural know-how to be effective, efficient members of the response team.

The first two analytical elements not only increase the effectiveness independently, but also aid the third element in increasing it even further. Having dedicated personnel trained and familiar with the system and procedures reduces processing time without any additional changes. This being said, DoD and FEMA have additional initiatives that have sped up request processing even further. They identified and staffed twenty-four PSMAs, ensuring the cost estimate and statement of work are correct, and published them so all levels of response organizations and elected leadership have visibility. The PSMAs shorten the processing timeline on anticipated requests for capabilities by completing the analysis and initial approval processing that usually occurs when a request for action is submitted. This shortcut reduces the processing timeline by half compared to that of a regular mission assignment.[54]

The second initiative DoD is using to shorten processing time is DDASS. This system allows visibility and tracking of all requests for action and mission assignments from submission to completion. All elements of DoD, from the unit on the ground up to the Secretary of Defense, can track the progress of the request through every step of the process in real time using this system. This increased visibility allows for a more proactive approach, thereby reducing administrative delays inherent in the old email and fax driven system. These technological

[54] DDASS worksheet.

initiatives help increase the effectiveness and efficiency of DSCA operations by decreasing the processing time for requests, therefore increasing the speed in which units receive mission orders to deploy to the disaster area.

Overall, the effectiveness and efficiency of the DCO/E has increased significantly since 2006 when the program reorganized. The DoD personnel know the other federal and state responders, are well trained, and have the tools available to provide responsive, agile support to the civil authorities during a disaster response.

Recommendations

Though the new organization has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the DSCA mission significantly, there is always room for more improvements. The three recommendations listed here are made to this end.

The first recommendation is to maintain the current organization but increase the level of coordination with local and state responders. The DCO/E currently focuses on coordinating with federal agencies, leaving little time for focused coordination with the local and state agencies. Due to this lack of coordination, the DCO/E does not fully understand the specific disaster response operations at the local level within their region. This has lead to some challenges when DoD personnel response to smaller, localized disasters. The issue that has stymied this coordination, and will continue to do so, is the vast quantity of local responders within each region.

Two items will aid with increasing this level of coordination. First, the relationships between federal and some state agencies are well developed, allowing the DCO and DCE personnel to shift their focus to building a reciprocal relationship with the other state and local responders. The second item that will aid in this is the next recommendation.

In addition to shifting the focus of coordination to the lower levels, the DCO/E should participate in as many local, state, and regional exercises as their schedule permits. Not only will this provide additional training opportunities and broaden their baseline knowledge of response plans, but will also allow the DCO/E to work with the local responders within their region, learning their procedures and policies while building a relationship with the personnel.

The final recommendation deals with increased DDASS interfaces and capabilities. The current system allows visibility for the entire DoD chain of command, but does not interface with FEMA's automated system. In order to overcome this incompatibility, FEMA personnel manually transfer the data from one system to the other, inserting an administrative lag time into the process. By integrating these two systems, the request and approval process will be completely digital, allowing increased visibility and speed of processing.

All three of the recommended actions will improve upon the current initiatives regarding the DSCA mission. These changes will continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the DCO, DCE, and DSCA mission.

Appendix A: DCO/E and FEMA Questionnaires

Questions for DCO/E: Relating specifically to disaster response mission (excluding the JTF-CS)

1. Which state and federal agencies do you interact or coordinate with on a regular basis? How frequently?
2. Do you feel this coordination and familiarity will assist in making any disaster response more effective and efficient?
3. Do you currently have a document identifying all DoD controlled military assets in your region? If so, do your state and federal partners also have this list?
4. Are you aware of the EMAC agreements active in your region?

I'm trying to figure out if we (DoD) have a good grasp on the capabilities already available within the states and which ones are promised from neighboring states.

5. How effective is the training program for DCO/E? Please take into account the state and federal exercises you participate in each year as well as the certification requirements monitored by ARNORTH.
6. Do the federal exercises provide an opportunity to work with the National Guard and Reserve leaders?
7. Do active duty forces participate in the federal exercises with you? (other than those identified for the DCERF mission?)
8. Do you have visibility of the available active duty forces within your area (actual BOG capable)?
9. Do you believe that having a Joint Manning Document for the DCO/E (making the organization a joint element) would assist in the overall capability to respond to a disaster?
10. Do you believe that adding a functional area for homeland security operations would assist in providing trained, competent personnel to your staff? Is this a recommendation you would be willing to support (if money and shortage of personnel Army wide was not a factor)?
11. What additional changes would you recommend regarding the current organization or training?

Questions for FEMA rep:

1. Do you feel the coordination and familiarity with the DCO/E personnel will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal disaster response?
2. Do you believe the federal exercise program is sufficient to train the DCO/E personnel in the conduct of the DSCA mission?
3. Are you familiar with the capabilities the military can provide in support of a disaster response in your region?
4. Are you comfortable with the request procedures for military forces?
5. Do you feel confident that the requested capability will arrive in a timely manner?
6. What additional improvements would you recommend regarding the DCO/E organization or training in order to improve our support to you?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT AND USE AGREEMENT FOR ORAL HISTORY MATERIALS

You have the right to choose whether or not you will participate in this oral history interview, and once you begin you may cease participating at any time without penalty. The anticipated risk to you in participating is negligible and no direct personal benefit has been offered for your participation. If you have questions about this research study, please contact the student at: (580)583-4145 or tanya.schilling@us.army.mil or Dr. Robert F. Baumann, Director of Graduate Degree Programs, at (913) 684-2742.

To: Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Room 3517, Lewis & Clark Center
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

1. I, _____, participated in an oral history interview conducted by MAJ Tanya Schilling, a graduate student in the Master of Military Art and Science Degree Program, on the following date [s]: _____ concerning the operational effect of the organizational changes to the Defense Coordinating Officer and Element.

2. I understand that the recording[s] and any transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. Government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the Command and General Staff College or the U.S. Army, in accordance with guidelines posted by the Director, Graduate Degree Programs and the Center for Military History. I also understand that subject to security classification restrictions I will be provided with a copy of the recording for my professional records. In addition, prior to the publication of any complete edited transcript of this oral history, I will be afforded an opportunity to verify its accuracy.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the recording [s] with the following caveat:

_____ Other: _____
_____

I understand that my participation in this oral history interview is voluntary and I may stop participating at any time without explanation or penalty. I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the U.S. Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

_____

Name of Interviewee Signature Date

_____

Accepted on Behalf of the Army by Date

Appendix C: Required Online FEMA Courses

IS 100 – Introduction to the Incident Command System (ICS)

IS 200 – ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents

IS 208 – State Disaster Management

IS 235 – Emergency Planning

IS 293 – Mission Assignment Overview

IS 700 – National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction

IS 701 – NIMS Multiagency Coordination System (MACS) Course

IS 702 – NIMS Public Information Systems

IS 703 – NIMS Resource Management

IS 800 – National Response Framework, An Introduction

IS 860 – National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP)

ARNORTH Mission Assignment Course

Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) Orientation Course

Bibliography

Army War College Department of Command, Leadership and Management. *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Handbook, 2011-2012.* March 2011. http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/HTAR.pdf (accessed May 12, 2012).

Chesney, Mike. "ARNORTH Hotwash: Minnesota Bridge Collapse and Response to Hurricane Dean." *unpublished.* San Antonio: US Army North, August 28, 2007.

Davis, Lynn E., Jill Rough, Gary Cecchine, Agnes Gereben Schaefer, and Laurinda L. Zeman. *Hurricane Katrina Lessons for Army Planning and Operations.* Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2007.

Delaney, David G. "Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950." *eNotes.* 2004. http://www.enotes.com/federal-civil-defense-act-1950-reference/federal-civil-defense-act-1950 (accessed May 21, 2012).

Federal Emergency Management Agency. "A Citizen's Guide to Disaster Assistance." *Emergency Management Institute.* May 24, 2011. http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is7.asp (accessed May 12, 2012).

—. "FEMA NRF Resource Center." http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/# (accessed March 31, 2012).

Fugate, Craig, interview by Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management United Stated House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. *Improving the Nation's Response to Catastrophic Disasters: How to Minimize Costs and Streamline our Emergency Management Programs* Washington, D.C.: Department of Homeland Security, (March 30, 2011): 1-8.

Library of Congress. Federal Research Division. "Military Support to Civil Authorities: The Role of the Department of Defense in Support of Homeland Defense." *Library of Congress.* February 2007. http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/CNGR_Milit-Support-Civil-Authorities.pdf (accessed May 12, 2012).

McNamee, Gregory. "The New Madrid Erathquakes of 1811-12." *Encyclopedia Britannica Blog.* February 7, 2012. http://www.britannica.com/blogs/2012/02/madrid-quakes-181112 (accessed May 21, 2012).

Moenk, Jean R. *Operation STEADSFAST Historical Summary: A History of the Reorganization of the U.S. Continental Army Command (1972-1973).* Historical, Fort McPherson, GA/Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Forces Command/Training and Doctrine Command, 1973.

National Response Team. " Reports: NORTHCOM Information Briefing." *National Response Team Conference.* October 2008. http://nrt.sraprod.com/nrtconf/reports/2009/RFA%20MA%20process%20Oct%202008.pdf (accessed March 21, 2012).

Owens, Jack W. and Tanya L. Schilling. "4th Brigade, 75th Division as the Defense Coordinating Element for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita." *FA Journal*, 2006: 18-21.

Slaughter, Thomas P. *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1986.

Springfield Technical Community College. "Shay's Rebellion." *Making a Nation.* 2008. http://shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/shaysapp/scene.do?shortName=Nation (accessed May 21, 2012).

U.S. Army North. "Hurricane Irene AAR: Consolidated Observation." *unpublished.* San Antonio: US Army North, September 6, 2011.

—. "Information Paper." *Defense Coordinating Officer Program.* Compiled by Mike Weimer. San Antonio, TX, February 15, 2012.

U.S. Department of Defense. *Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs.* DoDD 5111.13, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2009.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "National Response Framework Resource Center." *National Incident Command System.* December 18, 2008. http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/NIMS_core.pdf (accessed May 12, 2012).

U.S. Department of Justice. *The Posse Comitatus Act.* November 24, 2001. http://www.dojgov.net/posse_comitatus_act.htm (accessed July 13, 2012).

U.S. Department of the Army. *FM 3-28, Civil Support Operations.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, August 2010.

U.S. Force Protection Audits Division. *Defense Coordinating Officer Training and Oversight.* Audit Report, Alexandria: US Army Audit Agency, 2010.

U.S. Geological Survey. *Earthquake Hazards Program.* May 24, 2011. http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/states/events/1811-1812.php (accessed May 21, 2012).

U.S. Northern Command. "National Response Team." *Archived Meeting Materials.* 2009. http://nrt.sraprod.com/nrtconf/reports/2009/RFA%20MA%20process%20Oct%202008.pdf (accessed June 3, 2012).

Weimer, Michael. "DCO supporting slides." *unpublished.* San Antonio: US Army North, October 11, 2011.